



Testimony
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Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST)
Before the Public Safety & Security Committee
March 11, 2014

RE: HB-5531, AN ACT CONCERNING MUTUAL CONSOLIDATION OF DISPATCH FACILITIES.

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) respectfully submits the following comments in support of **HB-5531, AN ACT CONCERNING MUTUAL CONSOLIDATION OF DISPATCH FACILITIES**, which authorizes two or more municipalities to create a regional dispatch authority

Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) are the facilities operated on a twenty-four hour basis to receive 9-1-1 calls and dispatch emergency response services or transferring or relaying 9-1-1 calls to other public safety agencies. The PSAP is the first point of reception of a 9-1-1 call.

COST supports efforts to encourage PSAPs to regionalize in ways that will reduce costs without undermining public safety response. Some towns have explored opportunities to regionalize PSAPs but have faced barriers due to existing labor contracts or other factors.

We therefore *support the intent* of **HB-5531** to authorize two or more towns to create a regional dispatch center. However, COST is concerned that the bill will allow more towns to split off from existing PSAPs and form new regional entities on a random basis, without regard for the impact on the existing PSAP. This may weaken the financial base of the remaining towns.

COST recommends that lawmakers support efforts to authorize municipalities to create regional dispatch facilities as part of a statewide strategy to encourage PSAP consolidations and address barriers to consolidation that towns have faced.